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A GERMAN INVASION

BY

HENRY SEWILL.

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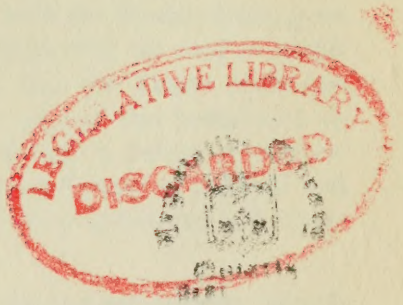
By HENRY SEWILL.



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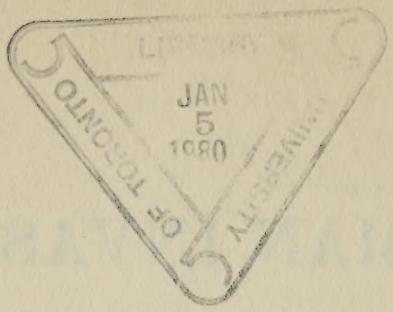

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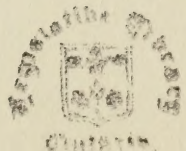
PREFACE.

In August, 1911, I contributed to the "Westminster Review" an article entitled "A German Invasion, and the Real German Peril." The article was subsequently re-published as a pamphlet, and this, whilst still in demand, is out of print.

I have now examined the problem more completely. I have sought to prove that the German General Staff will never seriously contemplate a descent on our shores so long as our means of defence remain approximately as they stand at present.

I have attempted to demonstrate the absurdity of the suggestion that a German attack upon England could take the form of an international duel with the Powers looking on in a neutral ring. I have tried to show that the conflict would set Europe instantly ablaze, and that the flames could not be prevented from spreading far beyond the boundaries of one continent. I have suggested that a policy of wanton aggression would involve the German Empire in political and military perils which her wise and sober statesmen will surely not provoke.

It is, however, obvious that our present security affords no guarantee for the future. If at the present moment we stand immune against a German invasion, we owe our safety as much to the difficulties of the assault as to the means at our disposal to repulse it. Our military organisation is glaringly defective; the vital problem of voluntary *versus* compulsory service is still unsolved. The safety of our country and of the Empire in the years to come will depend ultimately upon the numbers and quality of our people—their ethical



values, their patriotic spirit. These topics I have ventured briefly to discuss in some closing passages.

Whilst the proofs of these pages have been passing through the press I have had the opportunity of submitting them to the criticism of a military friend, an accomplished scientific officer. With this criticism I have dealt in a series of notes. My case does not depend upon the challenged points, and it will, I think, be evident that my friend's valuable and interesting comments do not materially affect my main argument nor invalidate the conclusions I have formulated.

H.S.

The Old Rosery,
Earlswood Common.

December, 1913.

A GERMAN INVASION.

MANY of the advocates of compulsory military training, including distinguished soldiers, are constantly setting forth in support of their pleas the danger of an invasion by the Germans, but none of them has so far put forth a reasoned and detailed statement to demonstrate the feasibility of such a descent. On such a matter the merely dogmatic statements of any authority, however eminent, cannot be accepted. A full examination of the problem, such as it is proposed to set forth in these pages, will show that so long as present conditions endure it must remain to the last degree difficult, if not impossible, for Germany to prepare an enterprise of the kind in the complete secrecy which would be necessary to success, and that if the obstacles to the first steps were to be surmounted, it would still remain impossible, so long as our means of defence remain at their present relative strength, to land an army capable of beating decisively the forces that could always be arrayed against it.

A few months of suspicion or a few weeks during which the menace of invasion seemed visible, would enable us to make such defensive preparations along the vulnerable points of our coast that an enemy, even in the absence of our Fleet, dare not attempt a landing.

No authority ventures to express the opinion that Germany dare dispatch an armada for a descent on our shores whilst there existed within striking distance a fleet equal in strength to her escorting squadrons. All are agreed that it would be necessary first of all to destroy our Fleet, to blockade it effectually, or to decoy it so far away that it could not return and intervene in time. No one essays to explain in detail how either of these things could be accomplished so long as our naval power is maintained at its present

superiority. Wireless telegraphy whilst rendering almost impossible the luring away of our Home Fleet on any futile chase has made easy the speedy recall of all ships sailing within a short run of our coasts.

I.

Development of the modern warship, with a speed undreamt of in earlier days; introduction of the destroyer, the torpedo boat, and submarine, have rendered infinitely more difficult than ever before the problem of protecting a fleet of merchant vessels in face of a brave, enterprising, and determined foe. The difficulties must be increased by the great range and power of guns, and by the huge targets presented by hulls of merchant ships of average tonnage. Every naval authority will agree that the covering fleet would be at the best seriously compromised by its convoy. It is safe to affirm positively that no sane leader would embark an expedition whilst the freedom of the waters was denied to him. Imagine the fate of a convoy of liners crammed with men, horses, and munitions of war, if a fleet of Dreadnoughts, submarines, torpedo boats, and destroyers were to force their way into their midst. Even if the bigger ships reserved their heaviest armament for use against the escorting battle fleet, such a squadron could, in a few minutes, send to the bottom, everyone of the transports that sailed within range. This could be done even by a very inferior fleet willing to risk destruction in a supreme effort for their country—an effort which British seamen, when called upon, may still surely be trusted to make.

Our fleets in other waters all over the world are sufficiently powerful, and it is impossible to suggest any call which should now denude our Eastern waters of the ships necessary to ensure the inviolability of our coast. This island forms the heart of the Empire, and whatever

dangers might threaten distant British lands, the first paramount duty of our ships must be to prevent even a serious menace directed towards this vital spot. Here, surely, there could be no difference of opinion among those responsible for our defence.

It is suggested that in time of war our fleet might be dangerously weakened by detachment of ships to guard the routes of our food supplies. We are not told how the German cruisers could keep the sea without coaling stations in the Atlantic, and how Germany could afford to weaken her North Sea squadrons when contemplating an invasion. We are not told whether Germany can be certain of the help of Austria and Italy in the Mediterranean, and whether her ships, with these allies or alone, are also expected to block the trade routes to the East. Such enterprises would engage the whole German fleet; it could not at the same time provide for the escort of an expeditionary force across the North Sea. In this part of the discussion no account is taken of the unquestionable fact that in a fight with Germany nothing could prevent the French from taking part on our side, both by sea and land. In the Atlantic and North Sea our ships would be reinforced by the French squadrons based on Brest and Cherbourg, and in the Mediterranean by the powerful fleets maintained by our ally in those waters.

Then again it is, to say the least, as probable that the Russian fleet would be on our side as that the Italian would unite with the Austrian and German. The Russian Baltic fleet includes already many powerful vessels. It is now being augmented and reorganised at a vast outlay. The possibility of its intervention would add heavily to the anxieties of the German Staff in formulating their plans.*

* My military critic expresses a low opinion of both the Russian and French Fleets. A strong Baltic squadron, bearing witness to the Russian naval revival, has lately visited English ports, and a powerful French fleet has joined a British squadron in the Mediterranean in a visit to Grecian waters.

II.

The talk about the cutting off of our food supplies will not stand serious examination. It could be done only after destruction of our sea power, and not very easily even then. It is, I repeat, extremely improbable that Italy would join its present allies, Germany and Austria, in a war of conquest on the British Empire; it is still more doubtful whether the united Austrian and Italian fleets would be anything like a match for the British and French in the Mediterranean. Germany, Austria, and Italy together could not detach squadrons and cruisers in force sufficient to clear the seas of our swift fighting ships, or to render the routes so dangerous as to deter from adventure mercantile captains of average enterprise. In the American war between North and South, although the North had virtually complete command of the sea, they were never able to establish an effective closure of the Southern ports, and successful blockade running was carried on from first to last. It would be literally a hundred times more difficult to close the ocean routes to these islands, and to prevent the safe entry into port of the majority of steamers engaged in the traffic. If the Suez Canal were blocked, the route to the East via the Cape would still remain open, and it would be a task of stupendous difficulty to close our ports to the trade across the Atlantic. The high speed of great liners would render their capture difficult, and the armament with which, under Government supervision, they are now being provided, would enable them the better to shake off a pursuer, especially in a stern chase. The only point here needing emphasis is that our North Sea fleet could not be drawn from its station by the menace in question.*

* My military critic points out that insurance and freights would go up enormously, and the corresponding rise in price of food might within a few weeks bring millions of our labouring population to the verge of starvation.

At the outbreak of war the German Colonies would lie at the mercy of our foreign squadrons and land forces. Colonies can be held only with the aid of sea power. Without weakening her fleet so as to put out of the question an aggressive policy in the North Sea, Germany could not dispatch to the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans squadrons big enough to safeguard her possessions in those waters. It must all along be borne in mind that our Empire would be at stake, and that all our imperial resources must be if necessary drawn upon. Indian troops could if needed be brought to help drive out the Germans from their East and West African colonies, and from the same source our garrisons could be strengthened in Egypt, and all our stations where the climate is suitable up to Gibraltar. In the Pacific our fleet, again reinforced perhaps by the French, would be able to dislodge the Germans from the islands now under their flag. In this work Australia and New Zealand would be bound to help, and would surely furnish the requisite land forces.* With England down Germany would probably use Samoa and the Bismarck Archipelago as bases for the conquest of Australasia, a prospect which the Dominion could not, to say the least, contemplate passively. We could thus instantly counter the threat of invasion by some shrewd blows against the German power.†

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* In the Boer War Australia and New Zealand sent valuable help. Since then their military forces have advanced in numbers and efficiency. It cannot be doubted that at a more urgent call they would each furnish a contingent for service in India, South Africa, or Egypt.

† My military critic here remarks that German colonies are of little value, and that Germany might retaliate by fomenting disloyalty and sedition in India, Egypt, and South Africa. He does not, however, refer to the equally serious dangers to which Germany surely would be exposed at home. In this connection it is hardly necessary to do more than mention Alsace-Lorraine, Poland, and Schleswig-Holstein. Socialism also might prove a crippling embarrassment. The Socialists, whilst proclaiming their willingness to take their proper share in defence of the Fatherland, declare their intention to proceed to any extremity in opposing a war of aggression or conquest. The Socialists include one-third of the electorate of the Empire, the biggest and best organised of the German political Parties.

III.

It does not need any profound knowledge of contemporary history, of the relations of the Great Powers, and of the science of war, to estimate the remoteness of the danger of a sudden and entirely unexpected invasion. The enterprise throughout, first during the indispensable preliminary negotiations of Germany with its allies, secondly, during the carrying out of necessary measures prior to launching the expedition, and, lastly, during the assemblage and embarkation of the troops, could not be kept hidden. The successive steps of the enterprise could be kept secret only if the whole of the neighbouring nations, their statesmen, diplomatists, consular agents, and military advisers, were temporarily reduced to a condition approaching imbecility. If Germany has spies abroad, there can be no doubt about the presence, besides our own, of foreign government agents, in addition to diplomatic and consular corps, in Germany. With or without a written bond of alliance, France must for her life's sake, inform the British Government of every serious suspicious movement of her hereditary enemy. The same remark applies with almost equal force to Russia, Holland, and Belgium. They also have Intelligence Departments; they also are bound by the most serious self-interests to warn, not only their allies, but their friends, of impending danger.

With regard to Austria and Italy, it is to the last degree improbable that Germany without informing her allies would enter upon a conflict which could have no other object than the overthrow of the British Empire, and the division of the spoils. Is Austria bound by the terms of her alliance to take part in such an adventure? It might please the Pan-German section of her people, but how about the Hungarians, the Slavs, and the other heterogeneous elements of her population who have no love for Pan-Germanism, but much friend-

ship for England. Owing to these racial antipathies Austria's difficulties in mobilisation during the recent war in the Balkans have been notorious. Similar difficulties would arise if a war against England were contemplated. The results of the recent war in the Balkans have rendered the Slav question much more pressing, not only for Austria but for Germany, and it is believed that the menace of the Slav will now remain enough alone to render Austria useless to Germany as an ally in a Western war of aggression, and even enough to put an end also to any German thought of such a policy.

Could the negotiations between the allies be completely concealed? The presence of Italy in the Triple Alliance was compelled by the former unfriendliness of France, and her dominance in the Mediterranean. Italy has now satisfied her ambition by the conquest of Tripoli. The establishment of German and Austrian power in her surrounding seas would now be vitally dangerous to her. Italy is attached to England by ties of obligation and deep friendship; if approached with a proposal to join in her destruction, there cannot be much doubt about the answer. Italy might pledge herself to remain neutral; she would hardly promise to refrain from informing our Government of the plot that was being hatched against us.

IV.

The difficulties of keeping hidden from first to last the preparations for an invasion seem insuperable, and if secrecy be essential for success it seems, on this ground alone, incredible that such a venture will ever be started.* It is, however, assumed not only that secrecy might be maintained, but that our fleet might be enticed away, and that this might be done while the whole of the Regular Army was campaigning abroad. So long as the present grouping of the Powers continues our Army cannot be called on to the Continent unless it be to take part in a campaign against Germany. But we could not transport our troops across the Channel unless we held command of the sea; we could not consider such an adventure unless our preparations, both ashore and afloat, should suffice to render futile any attempt at a counter stroke. Unless our Army were engaged on the Continent it is impossible to suggest at the present time any contingency which should draw from our shores so large a part of our troops as might leave our defences dangerously weak. Our Indian frontier in the present condition of Russia is safe for many years. If we had to reinforce our Indian Garrison, the demand could not be great. We have 75,000 British soldiers in India, without counting the volunteers, and, besides the Imperial Corps

* Whilst agreeing that complete secrecy would be very difficult my military critic does not deem it impossible. It must, however, be pointed out that to be delivered swiftly and unexpectedly the blow must be prepared in a time of profound peace, in a time when our own Government and those of our friends on the Continent were certain that Germany was harbouring no hostile thoughts likely to translate themselves into action. Germany would need to conceal her intention by offering one hand in pretended friendship, whilst preparing with the other to stab us in the back on the first opportunity. Such an attack without quarrel or expressed grievance would constitute an act of international brigandage unparalleled in the history of modern Europe. It would destroy the moral prestige of Germany among civilised powers, an asset which she could not afford to lose; it would make trebly sure an instant assault by France with all her might; it would make certain the swift advance of Russia in support of her ally; it would make doubtful the attitude of Austria; it would probably drive Italy out of the Triple Alliance.

kept up by native princes, we have 170,000 native troops. The bulk of these latter are now selected largely from the warlike peoples and tribes who have never failed us in any period of stress, including the Mutiny. There is no reason to doubt them now, and it seems out of the question that we should be called upon under any circumstances to reinforce our Indian Troops for many a long year.* But even if we were compelled to send away 50,000 to 100,000 men, or even the whole of the expeditionary force of 160,000, the fully trained men left behind, supported by the forces I now enumerate would more than suffice for our security.

We have in these islands nearly 300,000 highly trained soldiers, regulars and reserves; we have the Special Reserve, over 60,000, and the Territorials, about 250,000. We have also the Veteran Reserve now being organised. These cannot number less than 200,000. They consist of men who have served in one or other branch of the service, a large percentage in the Regular Army, and a large proportion being ex-commissioned or ex-non-commissioned officers. It is not likely that these men would show themselves less patriotic than Frenchmen in 1870. After the defeat of the French Armies in July and August, and the surrender of the Emperor's Army at Sedan in September, fully 75 per cent. of the able-bodied men of every rank who had gone through the military service volunteered into the new armies organised to the south of Paris, many for whom other places could not

* My military critic insists upon the possibility that troubles in the East, particularly in India, might suddenly strain to the last degree our military resources. This danger has been lately (December, 1913) emphasised in a series of more than remarkable articles in *The Times* headed "The Indian Peril." These articles described a widespread system of secret seditious propaganda affecting many races and sects, and suggested that the feelings thus excited might at any moment give rise to a revolt more serious than our Government has ever been called upon to deal with. On the other hand, since those articles appeared there has been held in India a representative meeting of Moslems, at which their leading men, in reasoned statements, re-affirmed their loyalty to England; pointed out how disastrous to India a withdrawal at the present time of the British power must prove, and urged that it could be only in the far future that the diverse and rival sects and peoples of India might hope to work out a system of government which would enable them to stand alone, with internal peace, and in safety against aggression from without.

be found shouldering their muskets and taking their places in the ranks. There can be no doubt that the same thing would happen in England, and it would be possible to stiffen the ranks of the Territorials by the presence of trained soldiers in numbers amounting to not less than a quarter to a half of the whole. In round numbers we should have in these islands after departure of the expeditionary force at least 500,000 fighting men. Out of these we need not more than 150,000 at the front to render impossible the landing of a hostile force big enough to strike a serious blow. This 150,000 would of course be selected from the corps of best quality. Behind them in support and reserve, the next 100,000 might be kept, and the remainder would provide garrisons for Ireland, and would reinforce the strong places and forts around our coasts.

As the steps of the invasion adventure progressed, the difficulties of keeping a veil over the movements would increase, and if it was correct to state that it would be in the last degree difficult to keep secret the beginning of such an enterprise, it cannot be wrong to suggest the virtual impossibility of keeping concealed the preparations for the final stages.

V.

It is impossible to believe that the German Government is possessed of some hitherto undreamt of subtle powers of diplomacy whereby not only our own, but also all the statesmen of Western Europe, may be hoodwinked; it is impossible to believe that Germany possesses means up to now unheard of through which hostile military movements can be hidden, not only from the common public view, but from the trained eyes of all the military Intelligence Departments of her neighbours whose vital interests are involved. Unless the teachings from the history of European wars during the past cen-

tury are to be ignored, we must admit the certainty that grave suspicions of Germany's intentions must affect our Government and set our defence organisations on the alert long before a blow could be delivered.

Let it be supposed, however, that Germany has settled matters with her allies, and that without arousing the least suspicion—an almost impossible assumption—they have secretly pledged themselves either to remain neutral or to give active support on the outbreak of hostilities. It would be next necessary for Germany to prepare to mobilise her army fully for war. It is out of the question that France could remain neutral; it is extremely unlikely that Russia would.

By deliberately restricting her population, France has rendered herself incapable, without allies, of effectually defending herself, in a fight to a finish, against Germany. Assuming that the French Army is now physically, morally, and intellectually equal to the German, the solid fact remains that when the French had exhausted their last reserves the Germans would still possess at least two millions of fighting men to call upon. With England overthrown, it might be possible for France to save her honour by a valiant resistance, but whenever it should please Germany, thus enormously aggrandised, France might be reduced to a position of vassalage. France would be compelled to spend her last soldier and her last franc in the effort to avert such a fate; she would surely be compelled to fly at Germany on the first hostile movement against our country.

Would Russia remain neutral? Perhaps only France and Russia are in a position to answer this question. Whether or not Russia were bound by treaty to help France, it is certain that she could not look with equanimity upon a conflict which, if it gave to Germany the hegemony in Europe, would put an end for ever to Russia's legitimate aspirations as a nation now steadily advancing to a front place among the mighty leading powers

of the world. Russia would probably help France—she would almost certainly do so if Austria should take the other side. Before despatching her expedition to England, Germany would, therefore, be obliged to prepare to place at least 3,000,000 of men in the field, and this would need to be done swiftly if she would avoid the risk of invasion at once on two of her frontiers. She would recognise the danger of relying upon the Austrian Army to check the advance of the vast hordes which Russia, now free from any pre-occupations in the Far East, might pour across the frontier.

Then there are Belgium and Holland. It is generally agreed that, in attacking France, the Germans, owing to lack of space along the French frontier, might be obliged to deploy their right wing in Belgian territory. This would menace the independence of both Belgium and Holland, and if the attack upon England were to succeed, their independence would not be worth a day's purchase. It is not easy to believe that these minor powers would " take it lying down "; they would, at least, mobilise for war, and Germany must be prepared to deal with them by force, if necessary. No one who understands the magnitude of the task will believe that Germany could take the steps preliminary to the mobilisation of 3,000,000 men without exciting much more than suspicion in the acute minds of every neighbouring nationality who have now their attention fixed upon the warlike movements of their mighty neighbour. Many thousands of reserve officers, many being abroad, would need to be warned at once, and a multitude of movements and arrangements must be started which could not be kept from the knowledge of the German Press, the people, and foreign sojourners, not to speak of spies, throughout the land.

German soldiers are very rarely called upon to serve oversea. It would be difficult to conceal from the troops and from the reserve officers called to the colours on mobilisation that they were destined for such a service, and difficult to prevent the news from leaking out publicly, even if confiden-

tially imparted only to the expedition. If not previously made known it would cause great dissatisfaction to the troops on embarkation.

I can speak of the moral qualities of the German soldier from, at least, some personal experience. In 1870, I passed two months in the British Red Cross Service, with the Army of Prince Frederick Charles around Metz. I conversed with great numbers of German soldiers, especially with the wounded under our charge. A fair percentage, led by good officers, would be always ready to "go anywhere and do anything," but a very large percentage have no taste for soldiering, a considerable percentage hate it, and have a horror of war. They fight stoutly under an iron discipline, and would no doubt always fight bravely in defence of their own soil; but brought across the sea to conquer the English, against whom they could feel no real moving enmity, they would not go into the fight with much enthusiasm, or with anything approaching a determination to conquer or to die. Since 1870 the number of men in the German ranks thoroughly imbued with the ideas of Socialism has increased enormously. These men have been taught to hold in abomination the thought of war, unless perhaps in defence of the Fatherland. They would compose a fair percentage of the expeditionary force; they would leaven it with shirkers and skulkers; they would go far to damp the ardour of their comrades, and check their *élan* at decisive moments.

The French Military Attaché at Berlin, in 1870, warned his Government fully of the preparations for immediate war being carried on in Germany, but the Emperor, relying upon the words of his Ministers, believed until too late that his Armies were "ready down to the last gaiter button." It is not likely that such fatuity will be displayed by any Power concerned at a similar juncture in the present day. If it is in the last degree improbable that the initial movements could be concealed, it must be counted virtually impossible

that Germany could throw dust into the eyes of all her neighbours whilst she gathered in her ports 70,000 men, and equipped them for a descent upon our coasts.

VI.

Soldiers with a valid claim to speak with authority seem to suggest that 70,000 German troops could be thrown suddenly on our shores, and, once landed, would be able to march upon and hold London, and compel our Government to accept any terms of peace they might be pleased to impose. Let us now examine this hypothesis more closely, and let it first be supposed that Germany has carried through every one of the preparatory measures discussed in previous paragraphs without any inkling of her purpose having leaked out. We must next suppose that the regiments comprising the invading army have been selected and conveyed, without exciting notice, to the North Sea and Baltic ports. An invading force cannot be composed solely of infantry, each man carrying his arms, ammunition, and personal equipment. It must be made up of horse, foot and artillery—heavy and light, as well as machine guns—ammunition and reserve ammunition, not to speak of food and forage, at least sufficient to last until supplies can be captured.

It might be possible to concentrate gradually 70,000 troops in Bremen, Hamburg and Kiel without attracting attention; but before the army could be embarked it must be mobilised, and this operation could not be hidden. A German army corps consists of 41,000 men. Besides artillery and machine guns, it requires 2,400 wagons and 14,000 horses. The expedition would need nearly two such corps. Besides reserve ammunition-wagons, the train includes field kitchens, and munition columns, medical carts and field hospitals, entrenching tools, field telephone and telegraph, and bridge materials. An invading force would need an extra

strong cavalry division, and this, with provision for casualties, would demand an increase in the number of horses. Pontoon trains might perhaps be dispensed with in England, but if field hospitals were left behind a proper complement of surgeons, many of them mounted, with their assistants, would be required, so that the men might not feel that if hit they would be left to bleed to death, or acquire septic poisoning through lack of dressing on the battlefield. Anyone with a little military knowledge may easily work out for himself an approximate estimate of the number of vehicles of all sorts, and of other impedimenta which, leaving out everything superfluous, would constitute the indispensable requirements of such an expedition. More than 20,000 horses would be necessary, and they must be all trained and with fitted harness; untrained captured horses would be of no use for cavalry, artillery, and other prime fighting purposes.*

It would be impossible to keep hidden the assemblage of the transports—the Press could not be gagged, the foreign consuls, agents and spies in the ports could not be blinded. The amount of registered tonnage required for a short voyage across the North Sea has been

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* My military critic points out that the Germans could build up the invading army from troops on a peace footing which are always stationed within reach of the ports; but he does not explain how these movements could be kept secret, and the knowledge of their destination withheld from the selected corps and kept secret. Then again he overlooks the fact that German corps on a peace footing consist entirely of young soldiers, none of whom have finished their training. Most of them have been in the ranks only a few months, the great majority are not kept more than two years altogether, a large percentage—the one year volunteers—remain for one twelvemonth only. A German expedition not mobilised in the usual way for war, not made up of corps stiffened by reserves, would consist of soldiers not much, if at all, more highly trained than the best of our Territorials, inferior in training to any of our regular troops, and not much better in this respect than many of our developing recruits at the depots. Raw German soldiers, with a service of a few months or a year, would not to a greater extent than our own men be imbued with that unshakable discipline which Lord Roberts continually urges would make them irresistible by what are described as our comparatively raw levies. My military critic further says that I have greatly over-estimated the amount of material and the number of horses needed by the invaders. He avers that cyclists would to a large extent take the place of cavalry. He does not refer to the fact that the enemy could not bring more than a very few if any motor vehicles, and must depend entirely upon horses for transport purposes.

worked out. For men, horses, guns, and wagons, an expedition of 70,000 troops with its train would need at least 300,000 tons, say thirty liners each of 10,000 tons. Fewer ships would of course be needed if gigantic liners of 20,000 tons and upwards were employed; but this would involve a greater risk. It would be the putting of too many eggs into one basket. A disaster to one such vessel with its vast cargo of men and material would probably cripple completely the whole expedition. The transports must be passenger ships, withdrawal of which from their regular service would excite attention. Cargo boats would be of little use, since everything must be on deck ready for rapid disembarkation, not dismantled and packed in the holds. The liners would need extensive deck alterations for the service, if only for the safe conveyance of the horses. A large flotilla of flat-bottomed barges must be also provided, and the transports would need fitting with special cranes or some means for lowering, first these boats, and then their cargoes from the decks. These preparations, however simplified, could not be kept from public view, neither could the embarkation of the troops, whether they were marched on board from quays and wharves or conveyed by small vessels to the liners outside the ports.*

VII.

The next move of the German Admiral would be to get out of port with this vast fleet of transports—it would probably number nearer fifty than thirty steamers—to marshall them in order, and to range his convoy of big and small warships for their protection. It does not need a sailor to estimate the difficulties of these

* My military critic declares that 150,000 tons of steam shipping would probably suffice, and he points out that published returns show that much more than that amount under the German flag is now often to be found in her ports at one time. This would facilitate an invasion, but would not help much to ensure secrecy for the initial movements.

manœuvres. No rehearsal would be possible. It would be hard to prevent some confusion, or perhaps a few serious collisions. Now would be the opportunity for a small detachment of British submarines and torpedo boats. A few of these running amok among the transports could easily bring about a catastrophe. At close quarters the hulls of liners would offer to guns even of small calibre no more resistance than a tin case could offer to a revolver; whilst huge upper decks, built up of saloons and state rooms, would be as vulnerable and almost as inflammable as a bonnet-box. It is doubtful whether any admiral would consent to sail whilst such a danger might even remotely threaten him.

The value of the torpedo boat and the destroyer, even when acting alone against great warships, was demonstrated by the Japanese, notably at Port Arthur. The submarine has not yet been tested in war, but its powers are not doubted by those best able to appraise them. It has lately been declared on high naval authority that to attempt the passage of the North Sea with a fleet of transports would be an act of supreme rashness if a small flotilla of submarines alone were likely to be encountered on the way.

His next task would be to get across the sea to some previously selected anchorage and prepare for the disembarkment of the army. To estimate the difficulties of these steps, the difficulties of getting the transports anchored in suitable order, covered by the warships, needs very little nautical knowledge or experience.

If serious suspicion of the attempt were previously aroused, many, if not all, of the possible landing places could be protected by floating mines. Inept as the Russians showed themselves at Port Arthur, they yet managed, by use of mines, not torpedoes, to send to the bottom at least one Japanese battleship, whilst by the same means the Japanese for their part, more clever and enterprising, drove into harbour, disabled or sinking, the chief vessels of the Russian fleet. We have regular mining corps

at our naval stations; volunteers at our mercantile ports. It is hard to think that all these at such a crisis would prove themselves quite stupid and useless. A doubt as to whether he might on nearing the shore find himself in a mine-field would make the German leader act with caution. He would be rash if he approached without first sweeping for mines. If one or two of his transports were blown out of the water it would be hard to prevent panic among the others. If the danger existed it would be enough alone to delay an attempt, if not to frustrate it entirely.*

Then there is the question of the weather. The weather in the North Sea cannot at any season be relied upon to remain calm for two consecutive days. A breeze on shore would render disembarkation very difficult; anything more than a stiff breeze would render it impossible. During at least six months of the year the danger of stormy weather seems alone enough to forbid an attempt. The enemy moreover, could not be certain that his operations might not be thus interrupted or put an end to, perhaps at a critical moment, when only a part of the expedition had been landed.

For the reasons already set out it is, I hold, impossible that a descent could be planned and carried out so secretly and suddenly that no time for defensive preparations would be afforded. If this contention is false the chances of a successful landing must be more favourable, although then they would be by no means assured.

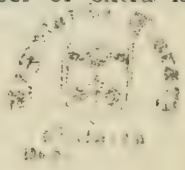
* My military critic doubts whether in an emergency there could be mustered out of the whole existing establishment detachments of mining corps with material sufficient to defend even the few miles of coast likely to be assailed.

VIII.

It does not seem to be suggested that an invasion would be contemplated while our expeditionary force, 160,000 men, were at home, and it does not need any facts or arguments to prove the madness of an attempt to land 70,000 men if such an army, supported by some hundreds of thousands of less well trained men, were ready to meet them. It is not necessary to discuss further the question of naval defence or to dwell longer on the indisputable fact that a descent would not be attempted by any sane leader until the freedom of the sea were absolutely assured him.

The expeditionary force being abroad the Army Reserves must be called out, and if any menace of invasion were recognisable, the Special Reserve and the Territorials must be embodied and mobilised. The Veteran Reserve would also be available for employment in the spheres best suited to it.

If the weather were favourable and everything worked without a hitch, how many hours would it take to land? An army of 70,000 men could not be flung on shore in one stroke. To lower into the barges and tow ashore more than twenty thousand horses, each requiring to be separately slung, guns, wagons and their loads, would alone occupy days rather than hours. Before beginning to disembark the main body and the train it would be necessary to land detachments to seize points of vantage to cover the operation. But unless our Staff were paralysed by fear or otherwise rendered incompetent and unless a scheme of mobilisation had not been worked out, every position round the coast where landing is practicable would be occupied beforehand, entrenched and with guns emplacements prepared. Any number of extra labourers



would be available for this work; it would occupy minutes rather than hours.*

The coast line from the mouth of the Humber to the mouth of the Thames may measure something over two hundred miles; but it presents comparatively few stretches where disembarkation on a big scale would be possible. In many places the shore is dominated by cliffs; in others it is too rocky, or formed by shallow flats, and in many places suitable anchorage for transports and battleships cannot be found sufficiently close to the land. Divided into disconnected stretches of varying length, the total extent of shore on which disembarkation of an army is practicable falls far short of one hundred miles. Every yard of the coast is known to our Staff, as no doubt it would be to the Germans. There could be no difficulty in disposing a force of 150,000 men in such a fashion that none of the enemy could set foot on shore unopposed. The reserves would be placed where they could be moved up rapidly to threatened spots. Trains with steam up loaded with artillery, besides motor traction of all sorts would be ready.

In time of war the railways would be entirely at the disposal of the Commander-in-Chief. The rapidity with which troops could be conveyed has been fully illustrated in late years. For example, on the Saturday preceding Bank Holiday in August, 1913, the London and South Western Railway conveyed 12,000 Territorials, with a certain amount of transport, field ambulances, and many horses, from London to Salisbury Plain within a few hours, and without in any way

* My military critic suggests that the landing might be facilitated by beaching the transports. This, however, seems a very difficult and risky manœuvre. It could be carried out only at high tide. Big steamers are not constructed to rest aground on an even keel. Some of them would take a great list; some would capsize. The operation of lowering the cargoes to the beach would still be difficult; it would take a long time. The enemy, once committed to this plan, there could be no retreat. The great hulls aligned along the shore would completely mask the guns of the escorting fleet; and unless the detachments landed to cover the disembarkation proved fully capable of the service, the defending infantry and artillery might advance to within close range. An opportunity for bomb-dropping would be also offered to our air craft. They alone might hopelessly damage the whole expedition.

disturbing the public traffic, which was of exceptional magnitude, even for that season. A glance at a railway map will show the network of lines with which our coasts are covered and the numerous junctions by which inter-communication is effected. The distances along the internal lines to the front would be very short, and with the rails clear and any amount of rolling-stock available, the detachments posted in echelon along the shore could be concentrated, reinforced, and brought up to formidable strength at any threatened spot within minutes rather than hours. For these movements cycles and motor cars alone might suffice, and not only for conveyance of troops but of light and heavy artillery.

Against troops sheltered behind even very slightly rising ground or in trenches the fire of the covering ships would not be very effective. Our infantry need not be brought up to the trenches until the approach of the enemy's boats, and then the fire of the enemy's ships must cease for fear of hitting their own troops. On the other hand liners lying within a mile of the shore could be damaged, set on fire, or sunk by ordinary field guns, or by howitzers at a far wider range. Huge transports, with their enormous upper decks, would offer targets almost impossible to be missed by very inferior artillerists, whilst the difficulty of hitting field guns distributed widely along the shore, concealed and entrenched behind even a slight rise of ground, would enable them to sustain a fire for a long time, in spite of the heavy guns of the enemy's covering fleet. It would be also possible to shift the position of the guns frequently to prevent the enemy from getting the range.

In these operations our troops would not need to manœuvre and undertake strategic combinations. They would need only to pour in their fire from the trenches and charge down at the proper moment upon the clubbed masses of the enemy on the beach, whilst the guns kept up their fire upon the transports and barges being towed ashore. In this part of the fight at any rate men more highly trained than our

Territorials would not be called for, albeit more than half of the forces first engaged could be composed of fully-trained soldiers. It would hardly be possible for the enemy to land the heaviest kind of guns and howitzers that nowadays can be employed in the field, with the motor traction necessary to drag them across country. A full supply of heavy artillery of this kind would be available on our side. A small supply of it would help to make a landing the more difficult. It would out-range the enemy's field guns everywhere, and add enormously if not decisively to the British commander's powers of attack and defence on every occasion.

The art of dropping explosive shells from air craft has now advanced beyond the experimental stage, and it will certainly be brought into play in the next war on every favourable opportunity. No opportunity more favourable can be imagined than an attempted landing of an army upon our shores. It is possible that the decks of great warships might be invulnerable to light bombs falling from a height, but there can be no question that such missiles from above would penetrate with ease the flimsy upper works of liners and cargo boats, and exploding between decks would bring ruin upon ship and cargo. The same weapon could be employed with equally damaging effects upon masses of troops with their material newly landed and getting into order for an advance. The bomb-dropping air craft might also perhaps blow out of their trenches the detachments first put ashore and occupying points of vantage to cover the landing, or at least they could so shake these parties that they might be the more easily dislodged by our troops and driven in upon the main bodies disembarking on the beach. The rapid movements of the flying corps ought further to render impossible any complete surprise, any entirely unresisted landing.

Before going further let us remind ourselves of the principal hypotheses we are asked to accept. We are asked to believe that the hostile intentions of Germany could be completely concealed; that preparation of the attack could be

kept entirely hidden, and that delivery of the stroke could be made so suddenly as to take us entirely by surprise. We are asked to believe that the attack might be made whilst the whole of our Fleet was too far away to interfere, when the whole of our Regular Army was serving abroad, and when at the same time our military organisation for the defence of our shores was neglected and in confusion. We are asked to believe that out of the 300,000 at the least available, we could not muster from 50,000 to 100,000 men, and deliver them at the threatened spots, so that no attempt at a landing could be made unopposed. We are asked to believe that the indispensable preliminary operation, the disembarkation and landing of a covering force of from 5,000 to 10,000 men, with artillery and equipment, could be carried out in face of resistance by even half their numbers, and we are asked to believe that the covering force could establish itself inexpugnably in positions commanding the shore when assailed and greatly outnumbered by the reinforcements which would soon be brought up. We are asked to believe that in presence of the resistance we could offer the army of 70,000, with all its artillery, equipment and impedimenta, might be landed without the gravest risk of a mauling such as might completely destroy its mobility, or at the least put out of the question a victorious advance across our island. An attempted invasion of England by Germany at the present time would constitute a series of experiments the like of which have never been recorded in the annals of modern war. The risks would be tremendous, the stake would be the life of the German Empire; is it likely her statesmen will ever contemplate such a hazardous game?

IX.

If the argument is to be pursued further we must admit the possibility that all the difficulties of the enterprise so far described could be overcome; that the 70,000 men with their train complete could be suddenly landed, and driving back the defenders of the shore, could prepare for their forward advance. The task before the enemy would be a march upon London after the decisive defeat of the British troops. London must be the sole possible objective; capture of a provincial town, however important, could produce no decisive result.*

From first to last the German general would be well nigh hopelessly embarrassed and handicapped by the necessity of guarding his train. Cut down to the lowest necessities it must be huge. As already stated some hundreds of wagons for such indispensable things as reserve ammunition alone would be needed. Whether moving to attack or defending a position a great part of the enemy's troops would be tied to his train. A train is virtually defenceless even against irregular troops. It could not be left in the rear nor on the flanks uncovered. It would need to be constantly enveloped by forces sufficient to guard it from injury or disaster. An advance into England from the sea would present a problem very different from an invasion across land frontiers on the Continent. It would be impossible with an army of 70,000 or 100,000 to establish and keep open communications with a base. All necessary military supplies which might be called for during the campaign must be carried along with the moving forces. An army of 70,000 of all arms, with its minimum of transport, if placed in one column on an English highway of average width would extend for a length of much more than sixty miles.

* My military critic affirms that London need not constitute the sole objective of the invading army; but he does not explain how a vital blow could be struck without occupation of the capital.

English highways are not designed with military considerations. There are few great trunk roads that lead from any direction on the coast towards London and the great towns. The smaller by-roads, whilst extremely numerous are narrow and tortuous, and lead as a rule merely from hamlet to hamlet, or village to village. They very rarely run for any great distance parallel with highways or offer accommodation for columns of troops wishing to advance in one direction. The whole country is narrowly enclosed in a fashion which renders the advance and deployment of great bodies of troops extremely difficult. The invading army must march in a formation which would allow it to assume battle order and deploy speedily in any direction. In this or in any other formation the enemy could not move along roads only, he must march across country. The rapidity of the advance would depend greatly on the weather; one day's heavy rain would bring him near to a halt.* In face even of weak opposition it would be impossible for him under such conditions to advance at an average rate of more than five miles a day.

The German commander would not have advanced many miles before becoming enveloped in the fog of war. He could not bring with him and employ a corps of scouting air machines; he could not detach scouting parties in numbers sufficient and to distances great enough to provide him with full information about his adversary. The British general, on the other hand, would probably need only his airmen for ample intelligence purposes, but his knowledge would be

* In the course of a description of an Army Staff Tour, "A Campaign in the Midlands," the well-known Military Correspondent of the *Times*, in the issue of July 14th, 1913, wrote as follows:—"Everybody knows that marching in this country presents more difficulties than are usually encountered in Western Europe. The narrow winding tracks, steep gradients, high hedges, and want of elbow room allow very little latitude. Two divisions on one road represent a column between five and six miles long at peace strength and double the distance at war strength. When supplies have also to be brought up along the same road by which these two divisions are marching it is not a perfectly simple matter to ensure the feeding of the troops, and least of all that of the Cavalry Division covering the advance."

supplemented by evidence gathered from every inhabitant of superior intelligence along the enemy's line of march. Aided by ordinary and motor bicycles, by an ample supply of motor vehicles of every kind and by the railways, the British general would be able to move masses of his force, and by wide detours if necessary, to any point with comparative rapidity. The bicycle alone would go far to make up for the inferior marching powers of recently enrolled troops. The German forces would be obliged to regulate their movements in accordance with the pace of their slowest columns, if not of their train which must be entirely horse drawn. For whatever purposes, not only of scouting but of fighting, they might be applicable, an ample provision of air craft would be at the disposal of the British commander; and they would be operating under the most favourable conditions over their own country. The experiment of working an air fleet from a distant base across the sea over an enemy's land has never yet been tried, and it must be more than doubtful whether either balloons or aeroplanes could be brought into use by the invaders; and this disadvantage alone would go far towards preventing their success.

X.

Next let us consider what forces the British commander, under the least favourable circumstances, would be able to array against the enemy after the landing of the expedition and movement on London. It would be a supreme crisis for our country. It is surely a libel on our people to suggest that the best qualities of the best among them would not show out brightly in such an emergency. It would be for the Commander in Chief to decide where volunteers of various classes should be employed, and there can be no doubt about the alacrity, intelligence and docility with which the duties would be taken up. The garrison of Ireland, if it should be thought necessary to keep this up, as well as the garrisons of our fortresses and forts, could be, to a very large extent, supplied by the Territorials. The numbers of these would surely be increased by many thousands from among retired members. The Special Reserve and the Veteran Reserve could be drawn upon for the same purposes. The cream of the last-named corps could either be organised separately, or what would seem better, could be distributed to swell and stiffen the ranks of the Territorials. Scores of retired officers from the British and Indian services and the Navy would come forward. Many of these men, sportsmen and athletes, although beyond middle age are quite fit for a campaign at home. They would be useful in many capacities.*

The expeditionary force being away, there would remain 120,000 Regulars at home. Let us suppose that not more than 50,000 of these were at once available to take the field at the front. Then would come the selected best battalions of the Special Reserve, say 25,000, the remainder (30,000 to 50,000) being used for garrison work or in reserve. Next would come the Veteran Reserve. If only Regular officers and privates were taken from this body for the front it could easily supply say 30,000 men equal in every respect to the

* A real alarm of invasion might bring across the Atlantic in a few days rather than weeks a force of from 25,000 to 50,000 Canadians.

finest troops in the world. The rest would be available in reserve or for garrison duty. Discount the numbers as we may the British commander would have at his disposal from the three corps I have named, a striking force of at least 100,000. There would still remain the Territorials. The fittest of these again would be chosen for the front, the rest sent into garrison or held in reserve. They would supply at least 100,000 good men.*

And here it may be pointed out that leading foreign authorities have expressed much higher opinions of the value of the Territorials than are put forth by some of our critics at home. For example, in his work† written after repeated visits to England, and attendance at our camps and manœuvres, the late General Langlois, one of the most distinguished of French officers of his day, expressed the following opinion:—"In case of a war between France and Germany, a landing in Great Britain is not in the least to be feared. The Territorial Forces, with one Regular Division, would much more than suffice for any eventuality, and even without the Fleet." General Langlois then goes on to prove that without incurring any risks of a landing on our shores we could send the great bulk of our Regular troops on to the Continent to help our allies, the French, if threatened by Germany. Similar evidence has not been lacking from authori-

* My military critic indites a dismal estimate of our military strength after departure of the Expeditionary Force. He avers that its mobilisation would absorb the greater part of our effective reserves; that the cadres do not exist for the troops left behind; that there is especially a shortage in qualified regimental officers, and in trained non-commissioned officers, and that the supply of artillery of all kinds is deficient. He dwells upon the impossibility of improvising a field army on a sudden emergency. Those only who stand behind the scenes can know how far the published official reports are to be relied upon; but if the statesmen and high officials who are responsible for our national security are content to allow continuance of a state of things such as my critic describes, it can be only because they rely upon our naval power, and are determined never to withdraw from the North Sea the ships necessary to inhibit absolutely the approach of a German armada. It must be always borne in mind that the operation of landing an army of 70,000 to 100,000 men, with all their impedimenta, in face of the opposition even of half their number has never been attempted in modern war. It is impossible to believe that such an operation could be carried through without great loss, even in face of troops not more highly trained than our Territorials, but armed with modern guns and rifles of high velocity and low trajectory.

† L'Armée Anglaise, Dans un Conflit Européen, Paris, 1910.

ties at home. For instance, in the course of a speech delivered on April 26th, 1913, Colonel Seely, the Minister for War, described the improvements in efficiency that had gone on in the Territorials during late years. He had not the figures for the rank and file, but was able to state that no fewer than 1,777 officers had had war service. He had recently read a report by a distinguished Regular officer, now promoted to high command, on a battalion which it was his duty to inspect. He reported that the unit was fit to take the field at once. It would be from battalions approaching this quality that the numbers out of the 250,000 available would be selected for the front.*

* Whilst I write there comes to my notice some opinions uttered in 1900 by the late Sir Frederick Maurice, one of the most distinguished scientific soldiers of the day, and published this year in the Biography edited by his son, Lieut.-Col. Maurice. After having carried out some elaborate experiments and manœuvres to test the mobility and possible tactics of infantry cycle corps, Sir F. Maurice, writing in 1900 on the subject of "Volunteer Cyclists for Home Defence," made the following statements. Having pointed out that cyclists had proved themselves capable of covering from 50 to 150 miles in a day without undue fatigue, he says "only small bodies of cyclists should be deployed at the front along each road they are intended to defend; but the number of roads is so great that I believe the largest number of rifle cyclists whom we could develop would be easily utilized in hampering and delaying the advance of a hostile army."

"The gain is great if you are able to deliver troops with such rapidity of movement, as I have described, and in such numbers as may be moved over many roads over a wide front. As the country between the roads leading to our coasts is of a peculiarly defensible quality, moderately large numbers along each of the several roads would give in the aggregate a force which it would be extremely inconvenient for an enemy to ignore."

"If we can gain time we shall always be able to meet any force that lands. If it is possible, wherever an enemy lands, to do what we were able to do at Brighton—namely, deliver forces from a distance of at least 150 miles on either flank, within striking distance of an enemy's landing, by means of the cycle, before he is ready to meet them—then in such enclosed country as we have in England we shall be able to impose a delay which would most seriously hamper an enemy. I feel perfectly convinced that no army pushing up (towards London) in coast districts in England would have been able to advance against the force which could be delivered by cycles alone at a more rapid rate than four miles a day. If we can enforce that delay, there is plenty of time to get ready a striking force, even if we are almost denuded as we were (during the Boer War) last year." Be it noted that Sir F. Maurice was writing before the development of the motor cycle and the motor car. These have enormously increased the means of rapid conveyance of troops. He wrote also of the old Volunteers. If these comparatively inefficient troops could perform the service described as within their powers, it cannot be believed that the Territorials would fall below the necessary standard. Not only could infantry be brought up in the way Sir F. Maurice suggested, but they could be accompanied by machine guns and field artillery carried or drawn by the rapid motor cars which would be now available in any numbers. I had estimated the possible advance of an enemy at five miles a day; Sir F. Maurice puts it down at four.

The morale of the German soldier has already been referred to; he would fight well, but would not be imbued by the burning patriotism which must inspire our men. If a British army of at least 100,000 good troops, not to speak of the large force behind them and in reserve, fighting on their own soil in defence of their country, could not attack and give a good account of a German army of 70,000, the quality of the race must have sunk low indeed, and our Empire must soon fall before the first determined foe that chooses to assail it. What is evident is that the German Staff will never seriously contemplate an invasion if it is certain that when the preliminary tremendous difficulties are overcome, and their army landed, they will have to fight and overcome a British force two or three times greater than their own. They at any rate will realise that it would be impossible for their troops, hampered always by their train, to deploy, manœuvre, and engage in strategic combinations, calculated to defeat decisively the forces we could always muster against them.

XI.

A very little military knowledge is needed to make vivid the difficulties of an advance on London. There are, for instance, many positions lying across any line of march which could be entrenched and fortified, and which would need either to be captured or turned by dangerous flank marches. Many strategic advantages would be on our side, and it would lie almost entirely with the British Commander as to where battle, intended to be decisive, should be accepted. Intrenched in a strong position, a force equal to that of the enemy, and with heavier artillery, would not be easily dislodged. Such a position might be occupied mainly by what may be styled our second quality troops, whilst 50,000 of the most highly trained and

mobile were left free to manœuvre, and to burst in upon the enemy's flank or rear as soon as his attack were sufficiently developed to render withdrawal impossible. Our troops, succoured, sheltered, comforted, fed and cheered by their countrymen, might march in light order. The enemy's men, in any case, must be weighed down by their burden. This would include emergency rations, full supply of ammunition, and heavy greatcoats or blankets for the bivouac. To provide tents would be to make more unwieldy their already oppressive train, albeit the nightly exposure of the men to cold and perhaps rain would form an evil hardly less depressing.*

A series of minor combats or a drawn battle would be almost as hurtful to the enemy as a defeat. Unless he could win a decisive victory and march in triumph unopposed on London his expedition must fail. His forces would be wasting daily without the possibility of reinforcements, whilst our commander would have vast reserves to call upon.

To work out an elaborate hypothetical war-game to illustrate the final phases of the problem before the German commander would be a waste of time. It is certain that the German Staff have no illusions with regard to the obstacles to be surmounted. They at any rate will not believe that in every department from top to bottom the men charged with the responsibilities of our national defence are either equally stupid, ignorant and reckless, or treasonably neglectful of their prime imperative duties. If some of our friends suggest it, our enemies, without unquestionable evidence, will not believe that our War Office has failed to work out, and keep up-to-date, a scheme of mobilisation which, when put into action on the threat of an invasion, after departure of

* My military critic declares that I have exaggerated the difficulties of the enemy's march, and over-estimated the embarrassment he might experience through the necessity of carrying with him and protecting the indispensable train. He further points out that the Germans are adepts at billeting and thinks they would easily find shelter for their men in the buildings spread over the countryside. It is, however, evident that it would be very difficult to find nightly billets for 70,000 men without grave risk of delay and confusion in resuming the line of march each morning.

our expeditionary army, would speedily deliver at the front the pick of the troops at their disposal, well organised, officered and equipped. I have throughout largely discounted the numbers of our forces, and have not over-rated their qualities. We may be satisfied that the German military leaders lack no information in this direction. They would ridicule the idea that 70,000 or 100,000 of their best soldiers could decisively overthrow two or three times the number of British troops having at their head a body of men not less well trained and hardly fewer in numbers than their own. The Germans are not likely to overlook the fact, which I have already insisted upon, namely, that their commander would move as with a log tied to his legs. He would not be able by any method to disembarras himself of his vast train; without it his life in the field must speedily be cut short; it would hopelessly handicap him even in the face of inferior troops not much greater in numbers, but free from a huge mass of impedimenta to clog and hamper their movements.

These would be some, although by no means all, of the difficulties at the end of the venture; it may be worth while to recapitulate those that would exist at the beginning. The freedom of the sea would first need securing for the necessary time. Our Navy, certainly with that of our ally, France, probably with that of Russia, and possibly that of Denmark, would have to be destroyed, blockaded, or decoyed so far away that there would not remain within striking distance a fleet equal to or even considerably inferior to the German escorting squadrons. Secondly the mobilisation, the embarkation and the landing of the expedition would need to be carried out so suddenly and rapidly and secretly that no resistance from the shore likely to inflict considerable loss should be possible. The direct risks involved in an attempt to strike the blow are alone enough to deter the German Staff from comtemplating such an adventure.

XII.

The probable attitude of the European nations in presence of an Anglo-German conflict, which has been briefly discussed in previous pages, here calls for further examination. If Germany were successful she would attain to a position of dominance such as the world has not witnessed since the Great Napoleon reached the zenith of his career. Such a result could not be to the ultimate advantage of any European State. It would be disastrous to France. She would be, as I have already urged, compelled to fight with all her strength against it. Whether the Triple Alliance would hold together is at least doubtful. The war in the Balkans has once more brought glaringly into view the weakness of Austria owing to the racial antagonisms of the heterogeneous peoples gathered under her sway. For this reason an attempt to help Germany must be at the best a feeble one; it is more than probable that Austria would not dare to intervene; it is certain that she could be easily checkmated by Russia. The recently demonstrated weakness of Austria has indeed been put forth as one of the reasons for the proposed increase of the German Army. Italy could not possibly gain any advantage by the overthrow of England and the aggrandisement of Germany and Austria. On the contrary, it would put an end to her cherished aspirations for a completely united Italy, to the fulfilment of which only Austria bars the way. The position of Belgium and Holland has been already sufficiently referred to; it could be only one of armed unfriendly neutrality towards Germany. Everyone who knows anything about Denmark is aware of the feeling that still prevails there with regard to Schleswig-Holstein. Denmark has a small fleet and a small but valiant army. Her position near the German great ship canals might make her alliance valuable; it would perhaps not be difficult to secure it.

A coalition against Germany of the majority of European Powers with the exception of Austria would be a more than probable result of a German attack upon England. In the present state of the world it would not in any sense of the word pay Germany to enter upon such an enterprise. This could be proved by a wider examination of the whole problem.

A German attack upon England would not only touch our nearest neighbour to the quick and arouse the apprehensions of the majority of European powers, it would agitate and put on the alert every one of the nations of the world from China to Peru. The United States and the South American Republics could not be indifferent to the possible rise of a power mighty enough to flout and disregard the Monroe Doctrine. Japan, the ally of Great Britain, could not remain unmoved by the prospect of the substitution of German for British power in the Straits Settlements and elsewhere in the neighbouring seas. Awakening China would not complacently regard the transfer to Germany of British Stations on her coasts, including Hong Kong, one of the six greatest seaports of the world. All these powers would be forced into an attitude of armed, unfriendly neutrality towards Germany, an attitude easily to be changed for one of active hostility in view of approaching danger.

It would be difficult to determine which would be the more hazardous course for Germany—to negociate with her allies and prepare to mobilise her entire army before starting the invasion enterprise, or to endeavour secretly to gather her forces in a time of profound peace and without any warning to aim a blow at the heart of our Empire. She would be playing for tremendous stakes. If she were to succeed in conquering England she might extort a stupendous ransom and demand the surrender of our Navy. She would not then have gained possession of our oversea dominions and gained that place in the sun to which she is supposed to aspire. Would she want India, Canada, Australasia, or South Africa? These

dominions need only to be named to show the futility of such an aspiration. They would not submit to be handed over to Germany. Her power would be increased; but she would not be equal to the conquest of any one of them. On the other hand, if defeated she would stand to lose Metz with Alsace and Lorraine, and perhaps Strassburg and the left bank of the Rhine. At the outset she would lose all her Colonies and oversea possessions. Her naval power would be destroyed. Her financial position both as regards trade, credit, and national resources, is far from secure. Outbreak of a great war would precipitate a crash more terrible than she has ever experienced, and if at the end she was called upon to pay a great indemnity she would be left in abject and almost irretrievable financial ruin. Germany, if unsuccessful, would be reduced to a situation more abased than that of Prussia after Jena, with the probability that she could not regain her position among the Powers until after the passage of many generations.

Although it seems necessary briefly to refer to it, full examination of the question whether we need a great Army to serve on the Continent does not lie within the scope of these pages. If maintenance of the balance of power in Europe be necessary to the safety of the British Empire, it is easy to see how the first blows against the Empire may some day be delivered in France or Flanders. Our statesmen of every Party have no doubt made up their minds as to the attitude of this country in the event of a German attack upon France. A comparison of the military resources of France and Germany is given on a later page. If at the outbreak of hostilities it were possible to deliver at the front the whole of our Expeditionary Force, this would not suffice to bring the first line on the French side up to the strength of the Germans; and in view of the overwhelming numerical preponderance of the German reserves, a contingent of 160,000 men could hardly

be expected with certainty to constitute the determining factor in such a colossal struggle. When other things are equal it is the big battalions that in the end command the victory.

XIII.

It is the decay of France as much as the aggrandisement of Germany that has increased the danger of a conflict. It is possible, albeit by no means certain, that France is still holding her own in the realms of intellect—in science, art and literature—and without doubt she is enormously wealthy. What she lacks is the material strength derived from an exuberant population of the highest physical and ethical standard. The French population has been virtually stationary during the past thirty years. It would have probably shown a decrease had it not been for the gradual naturalisation and assimilation of foreigners numbering from 1,000,000 to 1,500,000, mainly Italians, Swiss and Germans, who have been sojourning on French soil. The steadily accelerating decline in the birth rate has not been due to natural causes. Beginning and becoming most rapidly manifest among the wealthy and physiologically best bred classes, the custom of limiting the family to an average of two children has gradually extended practically throughout every social stratum. The custom has not been guided by true prudence nor directed by real science. It has been almost entirely the expression merely of a narrow form of anti-social and anti-patriotic egoism. All intelligent Frenchmen have been aware that the safety of their country has depended on population, and yet they have all refused to make the sacrifices called for in the rearing of enough children to keep up their numbers to the required strength. The French have, moreover, at the same time, been unconsciously carrying on a gigantic system of artificial selection. Unless we are to believe that the first-born are always the best of the possible brood, the system has prob-

ably favoured the survival of inferior stock, and tended to the decadence of the race.* The simple fact, however, remains that France has at home something less than 40,000,000 of people to face Germany's 70,000,000.

All the facts bearing upon the comparative military strengths of the two peoples were once more fully exposed by the discussions in the German and French Legislatures during the first half of the year 1913. The following excerpt from one of a series of articles on the subject by the well-known Military Correspondent of the "Times," which appeared in the following August after the preceding pages were in print, confirms the view therein set forth:—

"The French reply to the German Law is not a complete reply, but it is the best reply that France can give. France is beaten in the battle of peace strengths, and is beaten also in the battle of reserves. The German peace strengths will include in future about 170,000 more men than those of France. The German reserves, when the Law is in full and complete operation in 1937, will be more numerous by some

* In presence of the mass of unquestionable facts referring to the decay of their people constantly brought forcibly to the front by French men of science and statesmen, it is astonishing to notice at the present time the frequent references to a "French Renascence"—to "the New France"—by the Press and public men. M. Bertillon in a series of writings has dealt with the question from the scientific point of view; it was discussed from the standpoint of the statesman by two leading politicians, ex-Prime Ministers, at the Paris Hygienic Congress in May, 1913. M. Léon Bourgeois dwelt upon the danger to the country from foreign attack due to the increasing decline in the birth rate and the continuance of the high death rate. He pointed out that a century ago France contained 16 per cent. of the population of Europe, whilst to-day she had only 9 per cent. During the period 1901 to 1905 the excess of births over deaths to every 10,000 inhabitants was, in France 18, in Italy 106, in England 121, and in Germany 149. The excess of births over deaths during the next quinquennial period, 1906 to 1910, was lowered in France by 50 per cent., while it remained practically stationary in the other countries quoted. In 1911 the deaths exceeded the births by 34,889, while the number of births registered was the lowest ever recorded. The rate for deaths from tuberculosis in France was 22 per 10,000; in England and Germany this rate had fallen to 11. The general mortality in France was given as being from 18 to 19 per 1,000, while in England, Holland, and the Scandinavian countries it had fallen to about 14 per 1,000. M. Ribot, after fully describing the danger into which the nation must fall owing to the almost complete stoppage of its numerical increase, ended his speech with the following words:—"This country is sick and it ought to be proclaimed aloud. The French race is withering. The people must be informed of the peril by which it is menaced. All the efforts of the Legislature and of the Government must be concentrated upon grappling with this peril."

1,200,000 men than those of France. This situation, if it changes at all, can only change to the disadvantage of France, on account of the difference between the population of the two countries. A few more thousands may some day be added to the French peace strength by high pay for re-engagements; but from the broad numerical point of view, placing black troops aside, France has played her last card, and in future must become more and more dependent upon her friends and allies."

It must be further borne in mind that the German increase has been effected without prolonging the period of service. The mass of German troops are not kept with the colours for more than two years, whilst a very large percentage, all those who have passed a collegiate examination of a certain standard, are detained in the ranks for twelve months only. The personal sacrifice demanded from the Germans is much smaller than that called for from the French, whilst the short service of the German "one year volunteers," sets free the men who are devoting themselves to the pursuit of science, art, literature, and those destined for learned professions. This must prove of great advantage in promotion of real national progress. The burden of three years' service for Frenchmen of every class seems almost intolerable. It has created a vast amount of discontent, and stimulated the antimilitary spirit of Socialists and Anarchists. The presence in the ranks of a considerable percentage of disaffected men must tend to lower the morale of the French army to a serious extent.

It is not easy to avoid the conclusion that the French people and their leaders have been long fully alive to their weakness. It seems incredible that any other cause could have driven them in 1891 to ally themselves with the Russian Government. The Russian people had no voice in the matter. It was an alliance between the French democracy and the Russian autocracy—with a government which at that time personified every one of the evils and abuses which French-

men are never tired of denouncing. The French practically subsidised the Russian Government as an ally against Germany. In taking up vast Russian loans they poured their savings into the lap of Russia; they cynically supported her in depriving Japan of the fruits of her victory over China, and gave her the means of pursuing the policy of aggression in the Far East which led to so disastrous an ending. When Russia's overthrow by Japan was consummated French alarm at their isolated position again increased. This fear, together with the anxiety of Great Britain to maintain the balance of power, led the way to the entente, with its implied defensive alliance.

XIV.

Unconnected as it may at first sight seem, this examination into the resources and military power of France has a direct bearing upon the main theme under discussion. The chief hypothesis implies that Germany proposes to demand at the point of the sword what territories and what wealth, the property of ourselves or her neighbours, she thinks she stands in need of; that she proposes to enforce her claims by an invasion of England. It is, however, indubitable that she would be obliged at the same time to fight France; and if it seem easier to accomplish her purpose by first beating down France, it is evident she will choose this alternative. Before Russia could effectively move, and before our expeditionary corps could reinforce the French, it might be possible for Germany, by a sudden onslaught, to break through the fortified frontier, to defeat the French armies in the field, to plant herself firmly across northern France, perhaps once more to establish a blockade of Paris. With the help of Austria, comparatively feeble as it might be, threatening the flank, she might hope to beat back a Russian advance. She might hope, perhaps, with the aid of

her fleet, to delay the arrival of British troops. She might hope to hold France to ransom, and extort surrender of the over-sea dominions she is supposed to covet. There would be comparatively little difficulty in handing over any or all of the French colonies to Germany. They contain only an insignificant number of Frenchmen, while the natives would not be likely to protest against, much less to resist, the transfer. In every sense of the word it might pay Germany better to attempt the conquest of France rather than the overthrow and dismemberment of the British Empire.

German colonies at present form the mere leavings of the world's lands. France on the other hand is a great world power. In the Mediterranean she exercises protectorates over Tunis and Morocco and she possesses also Algeria as a colony. It is, however, a French colony virtually without French colonists. It holds comparatively few settlers of European blood, and these, whether or not French citizens by naturalization, are largely made up of Levantines, Greeks, Italians, and Spaniards. In her other vast African colonies, and in those she holds in the far East, there are to be found very few Frenchmen except civil and military officers. The island of Madagascar has a length of 1,000 miles. It is traversed throughout by healthy highlands and mountain chains suitable for European settlement. It gives a home at present to a few score rather than hundreds of French colonists, together with perhaps as many government employees. It is out of the question that France can ever people these vast domains. As a field for expansion across the seas they might go some way at least towards satisfying German ambition.

The German birth rate is now showing a slight decrease, but it will take a hundred years to bring it to the level of the French. The Germans at present are adding nearly a million a year to their population. Unless emigration on a large scale begins, Germany in a few years will have at home more than twice as many people as France—a number equal to the

combined totals of the populations of France and these islands. For it must not be forgotten that already for fifty years we have been following the example of France, and that in comparatively a very short time we shall be in a similar position —unable to make any response to the call for people of their own race more and more urgently being put forth by our Dominions and Colonies. These magnificent territories, nearly as big as three Europes, with the finest lands and climates on the earth's surface, could take and absorb our natural increase for at least some hundreds of years. Our present surplus does not equal one-third of the demand.

XV.

The German Government, acting upon the best scientific advice, and served by an admirable bureaucracy, has persistently striven, through a hundred years, to develop a people physically, mentally, and morally of the highest quality; and however discontented a portion of the populace may be with regard to high politics, they are all sufficiently intelligent and well-informed to back up the authorities in promotion of social progress. Germany's advance in public hygiéne, especially during the past fifty years, has proceeded with ever increasing speed, and the steadily diminishing death rate testifies to the ameliorated health, and improving physique of the people. German social organisation in many respects is the best in Europe. Take it all round German education, in so far as it tends to produce efficient citizens, is in advance of that of most of her neighbours. Whether true or not, a considerable section of Germans believe their nation to be throughout its social strata, from below upwards, on a higher plane of civilisation than their neighbours. They accept their Emperor's description of themselves as " the salt of the earth." They believe that sooner or later they will be able to enforce by weight of numbers their right to " a place in the sun," and

will be justified in declaring it their mission to supersede an inferior by a higher civilisation.

This is the spirit which animates the writings of authors like General von Bernhardi, and which has lately been displayed in a book by the German Crown Prince. General von Bernhardi and the school he represents are, however, far removed from the class of irresponsible chauvinists. The influence of the philosopher Nietzsche seems to pervade their writings. They recognise that the mastery of the world can fall only to the people whose claim is based, not alone on numbers, but on the superior character of its individual citizens. The peoples who are to dominate must possess the highest physical, moral and ethical qualities; they must be inspired throughout by a lofty patriotism which will render them ready and willing at the call of their leaders to make any sacrifice, to give up their worldly goods, to shed their blood, and die for any cause in promotion of the welfare and grandeur of their country. General von Bernhardi and those who believe in the great destiny of their race, are not foolish enough to suppose that the hour is near when the blow for world-dominion can be safely struck. They are fully alive to the prosaic fact that at present the Socialist party is steadily growing; that it already constitutes at least one-third of the German people, and that its progress must be checked and its conversion effected before a world-conflict is entered upon, such as an attempted invasion of this island would surely provoke.

XVI.

There cannot be the least doubt about the evil effects upon expert and popular foreign opinion that have been wrought by the lack of patriotism manifested by our people when called upon to make sacrifices for their country, very much less onerous than are cheerfully borne by almost every other civilised nation. This fact is dwelt upon

by German writers, and used in arguments to prove the decadence of the British race, and their unworthiness or unfitness to possess and govern any longer the vast empire now under their sway. Nor have German observers failed to note our steadily falling birth-rate, with its inevitable result if continued of cutting off the indispensable supply of British people to our vast Colonies and Dominions.

The parade of the invasion bogie, if not doing harm, is doing no good to the cause of national military training and national military service. The case for the former of these at any rate is strong enough to need no bolstering up with questionable statements and weak arguments. Military training is imperatively called for in all our schools, from low to high, and in our Universities. It is indispensable as a part of education. It is necessary for the inculcation of discipline and patriotism; for the complete development of those qualities in character which alone are of real value in any system of education.

With regard to compulsory service, no one who has had any sufficiently intimate acquaintance with a conscript army can doubt the fact that one volunteer is still equal to two pressed men. If, so far as the Territorials are concerned, our voluntary system is a partial failure, this is mainly due to deplorable apathy or lack of patriotism displayed by the classes to whom service in that corps would mean no real sacrifice of any kind. Among the classes that claim leadership and affirm that they have the greatest stake in the country, there are always available many thousands of young fellows of the right age who form the finest military material in the world. Many of them have already been trained, they have all experienced the discipline of the school playing fields, they need but slight instruction to make them into soldiers.

From 80,000 to 100,000 of such recruits in the Territorials could by their example and influence soon fill the ranks to overflowing. The Training Corps might easily provide a full complement of officers. It seems to need only a

little enthusiasm on the part of the classes in the higher social strata to render compulsion in our service for home defence entirely unnecessary.

It ought to be well within our power to provide a Territorial army which, including reserves, should always number far more than half a million of tried effectives. It might be an army which, by its records in marksmanship with rifle and field gun, by its demeanour and performances on the drill ground, in camp, and at manœuvres, could demonstrate to all competent critics its ample fitness for every duty it could be called upon to perform. The national sacrifice needed to produce such a result would be the merest trifle compared with that now being borne by our neighbours. A very small percentage out of the numbers available is required, and these might be derived entirely from the classes upon whom the burden would lie lightest.

XVII.

Behind the protection of our sea power, a power now to be augmented from year to year by our colonies, we have time to put our house in order. We have time to make doubly sure the safety of our shores; we have time to turn to the solution of the social problem upon which both national and imperial strength and stability must ultimately depend.

The social problem is the problem of raising our people to a higher and higher level of true civilisation. Science is giving to mankind more and more the means whereby they may mould as they please their physical and moral future. The civilised nations that go to destruction at this epoch will go with their eyes open. The possible causes of decay are recognisable by every intelligent educated citizen. They are preventable. Far from perfection as they may be our sanitary laws are

already more elaborate, and the means of enforcing them more complete, than in any other country. In practical public hygiene these islands lead the world. We have demonstrated the fact that not only tuberculosis and typhoid fever but most of the diseases that keep the death-rate high, and leave their evil marks on the constitution of survivors, can be put an end to. The excessive infantile mortality, especially among the poor, is being reduced wherever scientific methods are brought to bear, and the number of physical incapables among those who have passed through the ordeal of improper feeding and preventable disease is being steadily diminished. A large percentage of our unemployables is formed by the physically unfit; this percentage can be reduced to a negligible quantity.

In further promotion of public health as well as of real education the most urgent necessity is the abolition of the slum and the slum dwelling—the latter almost as common in the country as in the town. The slum and the slum dwelling constitute the prime factor in causation of the physical debility which predisposes to disease; they form the propagating grounds for every variety of infectious malady. The darkness, filth and hideousness of the slum combine to lower the moral qualities of its inhabitants. The slum's ugliness has entered the souls of multitudes of our people and has helped to debase them to the level of the brute. To emancipate the children of the poor from such environments must be the first step in real education—education directed to development of higher character.

Our educational system is proceeding on right lines, but the period of primary education needs extending, whilst secondary and technical education, if not made compulsory, need to be promoted and facilitated by every possible means. The number of inefficients, the unskilled labourers of both sexes, who form so large a section of the unemployed, can be by education easily reduced to a small proportion. The great bulk of our people can be bred at least useful citizens.

The chief root causes of pauperism can be speedily destroyed, and the physical and ethical qualities of the people can be raised and kept at a level corresponding to the vast and growing material wealth of the nation.

With regard to the falling birth-rate the disastrous results that must follow the undue restriction of increase in any nation aspiring to imperial power is being demonstrated in France. This, as well as the evil effects upon the race that must follow a blind system of artificial selection, was discussed on an earlier page. If such a system were adopted by a breeder of stock of any kind there would be no doubt about the ultimate result. To produce the best, those individuals possessing the superior qualities desired must be selected to continue the strain. This is effected by nature when not interfered with; it can be achieved by art only when nature is closely copied. The falling birth-rate is a question both of morals and economics. It is difficult to deny the immorality of couples among the well-to-do and wealthy classes who agree to have no children or to limit their families to one or two. In the vast majority of cases this restriction of births is due to purely narrow, selfish motives. Almost complete suppression of the philoprogenitive instinct must be morally bad for the man, worse for the woman. In luxurious homes the two or three children, unless endowed with rare innate strength of character, can hardly escape spoiling. On economic grounds a strong case can be made out for the limitation in the families of the very poor, and in the families of the struggling lower middle classes and professional men; but in the latter classes, at any rate, the limitation need not be excessive, and whatever ease it may bring to individual parents, it is evident that interference with natural fertility carried beyond a certain point, must be injurious to the welfare of the nation as a whole. If the falling birth-rate is to be checked it can be only by some form of spiritual revival. The people must be led to recognise and act upon the fact that selfishness does not lead

to contentment, and that happiness is not to be achieved by pursuit of pleasure and amusement, or through the cult of vulgar luxury. Here the State, except in so far as it can exert influence through education, is powerless. The State can, however, do at least something to encourage increase among the best stocks of its populace, and can perhaps do more to prevent multiplication among the classes who are the subjects of diseases—physical or mental —which have been proved to be transmissible or hereditary. The recent legislation dealing with the feebleminded is a step in this direction.*

If the British Empire is to endure we need in these islands an exuberant population as high in civilisation as that of any of its neighbours, and mounting always towards a higher plane. If the bigger social sores that affect the body politic were once healed, and the millstone of pauperism removed from the nation's neck, an estimate of the population which these islands could support might be made. We need a large surplus for the expansion and consolidation of the Empire and we should be able to offer a home across the seas to every decent citizen for whom a place in these islands could not be found. Not to speak of India and our vast, albeit minor, colonies, some tropical, some sub-tropical, which, thanks to medical science, are becoming more and more suitable to European settlers, our great dominions, as already pointed out, could between them take and absorb many more than our normal surplus for some hundreds of years; and if in the course of centuries the population problem should become acute, science would have placed in the hands of posterity the means of solving it. If the British Nation should really desire it, they might so order things that, if not in our day then in the day of our children

* The importance of the birth-rate question is becoming slowly recognised, and a commission of inquiry recently organised by private citizens, but including some Local Government Board officials, is now at work upon it.

and our grandchildren, the Empire might be made invincible or invulnerable. With a population vast in numbers, of the highest possible ethical quality, trained and organised for defence, no power on earth would dare assail us, and the mere thought of an invasion of these islands would be rendered once for all impossible.

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